

Quoting Robert Burns

It began with the woman in the commercial:
she had dirty socks

her boy had played baseball-
in-the-mud
as all AMERICAN boys do...

We had turned the set on
leaving the room to do our other business and
leaving it to its covertly explicit ramblings, when
suddenly childlike, percipient...

she began quoting Burns without a brogue like making
faces in the car on the highway
without adjusting the rearview mirror
to see them anymore:
doing the thing just to do it
not to keep sane on a long trip or
to try out different smiles
to use in public or to sell
detergent.

Of course I was not there,
otherwise it would have been tainted
as all commercials are having more to do with
the fat man in the biggest office
than with clean socks or
AMERICAN boys who, of course, play baseball-in-
the-mud.

It was night
over the rows of dry cornstalk arms
(broken into elbows just above the surface)
snow was the promise for that night
and my truck whined down the highway
either side black as the
edge of a mattress
until

a glowing green house emerged orange in
the starboard vastness of dead fields... *Life*
was there:
roses, mums, zinnias, tulips
perhaps even strawberries or beans

In the darkness, the elbows
shuddered beneath the first flakes.
As I turned off the radio,
I believe my face glowed dimly in the mirror by the
dashboard lights...
Life was there.

The snow came secretly, later that night rendering
the stalk-arms overtly implicit
within the whiteness:
symbol of the housewife
with a million dirty socks
and no more commercial
to let her know,
quoting Burns without a brogue,
giving up on the impossible purity of snow
in anything too ulterior--- too
prepared.

But no one heard the woman or the
stalk's movement.
I make my faces alone
without even the eye of the mirror,
quoting Burns just because it's Burns.